

TO: Chief Executive Officers
Chief Instructional Officers
Chief Student Services Officers

FROM: Marty Alvarado,
Executive Vice Chancellor, Educational Services & Support

RE: Grading Policies and Term Extension Guidance Due to COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic and the rapidly escalating social and physical distancing required has substantially disrupted instruction for all institutions. As a result, colleges throughout the state have aggressively converted face-to-face courses to online or alternative formats with many faculty and students experiencing online teaching and learning for the first time. Given this unprecedented and unexpected transition, faculty and students require maximum flexibility to effectively navigate the current term.

Based on the information available as of the date of publication, this memo provides guidance on grading policies and term extensions focused on supporting students enrolled in the current environment. Topics covered in this memo include the following:

- Grading Policies: Pass/No Pass Grade (P/NP) Options
- Grading Policies: Incomplete or In Progress Grade Options
- Guidance for Extending the Term
- Course Repetition Due to Extenuating Circumstances

Grading Policies: Pass/No Pass Grade Options

Executive order 2020-02 suspends the title 5, section 55022 requirement that students select the “pass or no pass” grading option prior to the 30% mark of the term. Additionally, the executive order suspends the requirement that units attempted for which the symbol “NP” is recorded be considered in probation and dismissal procedures. Students that attempt to continue to complete a course under the current situation, rather than withdraw, will not be negatively affected should they ultimately be unable to successfully complete the course.

While the Chancellor’s Office is in discussions with the state’s primary transfer institutions, CSU and UC, at the time of this guidance, the potentially adverse transfer implications of a pass or no-pass grading option remain in effect. For these reasons, colleges are advised against implementing blanket pass or no-pass grading policies and encouraged to provide updated information to faculty and students regarding the pass or no-pass grading option, and the potential impact for transfer purposes. The Chancellor’s Office will continue to work with UC and CSU, but colleges are encouraged to share a few transfer related issue areas such as:

- Most transfer institutions do not compute a GPA for a P/NP course, however in some instances a passing grade is computed at a 2.0 level, potentially adversely affecting a student's overall GPA score.
- Most transfer institutions, including CSU and UC, require courses for the major to be completed with a letter grade, therefore a P grade may result in a student needing to retake a course.
- Many transfer institutions restrict the allowable transfer units that may be taken as P/NP.

In enacting these grading policy changes, colleges may need to revise their Spring 2020 catalogue policies and should broadly and proactively communicate changes to students and faculty, including posting on their website where applicable. We recommend colleges provide written guidelines to students, staff, and faculty to ensure proactive advising and support for students.

Grading Policy: Incomplete and In Progress

Per title 5, section 55023, district governing boards may authorize the use of the non-evaluative symbols "I" for Incomplete and "IP" for In Progress. This section provides guidance on the allowable uses of these symbols and recommends how these rules may be applied to the current situation.

Incomplete. Under section 55023, the "I" symbol may be used for students whose academic work for unforeseeable, emergency, and justifiable reasons at the end of the term may result in incomplete coursework. The condition for the removal of the "I" must be stated by the instructor in a written record that contains the conditions for the removal of the "I" and the grade assigned in lieu of its removal. This record must be given to the student with a copy on file with the registrar until the "I" is made up or the time limit has passed. A final grade shall be assigned when the work stipulated has been completed and evaluated, or when the time limit for completing the work has passed. The "I" may be made up no later than one year following the end of the term in which it was assigned. The "I" symbol may not be used in calculating units attempted nor for grade points.

For the duration of the COVID-19 crisis, faculty should assess on a student-by-student basis when the use of an "I" symbol would be appropriate for a student impacted by COVID-19, and whether the student's individual circumstances constitute an "unforeseeable, emergency, and justifiable reason" for needing additional time.

In progress: Under section 55023, the "IP" symbol may be used only in those courses which extend beyond the normal end of an academic term. It indicates that work is "in progress," but that assignment of an evaluative symbol (grade) must await its completion. The "IP" symbol must remain on the student's permanent record in order to satisfy enrollment documentation. The appropriate evaluative symbol (grade) and unit credit must be assigned and appear on the student's permanent record for the term in which the course is completed. The "IP" symbol must not be used in calculating grade point averages.

For the duration of the COVID-19 crisis, the "IP" symbol should be used when a course has been temporarily suspended and is expected to reconvene and complete instruction at some point beyond the end of the established term. Colleges should communicate this clearly to students in impacted courses and proactively plan for when courses may reasonably be continued and completed.

Guidance for Extending the Term

Executive Order 2020-02 suspends title 5, section 58002 and 55702 requirements for a governing board to request and obtain approval of the Chancellor to extend their Spring 2020 term. This executive order authorizes all colleges to extend their Spring 2020 term through June 30, 2020, as needed. Colleges intending to extend their terms are required to notify the Chancellor's Office of the original term end date, the extended term end date, and the number of courses impacted by the extension. Colleges who select to extend their term can submit this information by completing the Extension of Spring 2020 Term form here: <https://bit.ly/S20Extension>. Colleges that anticipate needing to extend beyond June 30, 2020, should contact Vice Chancellor Aisha Lowe at alowe@cccco.edu.

Course Repetition Due to Extenuating Circumstances

In light of the variety of ways that COVID-19 may disrupt course progress and completion, Executive Order 2020-02 establishes COVID-19 as a recognized extenuating circumstance and suspends the requirements in title 5, section 55045, for students to prove an extenuating circumstance when petitioning to retake a course attempted during the recognized pandemic. Colleges should disregard the previous grade and credit when computing GPA, once the course has been repeated.

For questions about this memo, please contact Marty Alvarado at (916) 327-5492 or malvarado@cccco.edu or Aisha Lowe at (916) 322-4205 or alowe@cccco.edu

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